

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
U.S.-MEXICO BORDER FIELD COORDINATING COMMITTEE (FCC)

1995-98 Accomplishments



Fact Sheet

THE FCC: The United States-Mexico Border Field Coordinating Committee (FCC) is composed of field representatives from seven bureaus within the Department of the Interior. The bureaus are the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, Minerals Management Service, National Park Service, US Geological Survey, and US Fish and Wildlife Service. The FCC promotes, facilitates and enhances communications and coordination between and among member bureaus and offices with respect to environmental issues of interest and concern to the Department. The FCC is also a contact point available for those outside the Department who have an interest in natural and cultural resource issues along the border.

1995-98 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The FCC provided support for the international conference "Celebration of Desert Cultures" held in Caborca, Sonora, Mexico, March 2-5, 1995.
- In April 1995, the FCC completed the "United States Department of the Interior Criteria and Guidelines for Evaluating Projects and U.S.-Mexico Border Activities," in English and Spanish. This comprehensive document was prepared at the request of the newly established Border Environment Cooperation Commission (BECC) to assist it in developing criteria and establishing guidelines for evaluating border projects that it was established to certify.
- FCC member bureaus supported and participated in United States-Mexico Border States Conferences on Recreation, Parks, and Wildlife held in Brownsville, Texas; Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico; and Tucson, Arizona; in 1995, 1997 and 1998, respectively.
- In 1995 and subsequent years, the National Park Service has provided opportunities for participation by bureaus within the Department in its "Getting to Know Mexico" binational training course and others.
- In 1995, a one-time appropriation of \$33,000 was provided to the Tohono O'odham Nation, through the Bureau of Indian Affairs, to repair its southern boundary fence along the United States-Mexico border.
- In February 1996, Water-Resources Issues Fact Sheet No. 1 was printed describing the "United States-Mexico Border Area, as delineated by a shared-water resources perspective." This was the first in a series of Fact Sheets that define the basic hydrologic and geologic information, data deficiencies, and major issues to make critical decisions for environment and natural resource protection on the border.
- On May 6, 1996, during the 13th annual meeting of the Binational Commission, in Mexico City, Secretary Babbitt, Department of the Interior, and the US Geological Survey signed a US-Mexico Aerial Photography Agreement with Julia Carabias, Secretary of Environment, Natural Resources and Fisheries (SEMARNAP), and the Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática.
- FCC Bureaus provided financial support and other contributions to the first and second International Conferences on Natural Resources and Cultural Heritage sponsored by the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, at New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico, in September 1996, and at Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona, in November 1997, respectively.
- In September 1996, the Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service sponsored a field training session with Mexican counterparts on both the US and Mexican portions of the Upper San Pedro River Basin. A binational

group of 30 participants learned about water use, livestock grazing, mining operations, wildlife habitat, recreation opportunities, cultural resources and restoration in the Basin.

- In an effort to better understand the numerous projects being undertaken, a 65-page report on "Lower Rio Grande Issue Team Activities for FY97" was completed in September 1996.
- On November 16, 1996, during an Arizona-Mexico Commission plenary meeting, the Governors of Arizona and Sonora signed a joint declaration titled "Managing Natural and Cultural Resources and Promoting Sustainable Development in the Sonoran Desert Borderlands of Arizona and Sonora, A Proposal for Cooperative Resource Management Recognizing the Sovereignty of Adjoining Nations." FCC members helped visualize and develop this declaration.



Dave Krueper, BLM Wildlife Biologist, informing binational participants about resources in the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area. Photo by B. McClure

- Color infrared aerial photography at 1:40,000-scale was completed in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California within 100 miles of the United States-Mexico border.
- With encouragement and support by the FCC, Mexico completed color infrared photography at 1:40,000-scale for portions of its high priority areas and black and white aerial photography at 1:75,000-scale for other areas.
- The FCC helped produce a bilingual audio visual program about the Rio Grande ecosystem called "Un Rio...Muchas Voces (One River...Many Voices)" for use in public education systems within the United States-Mexico border region.
- In 1996 and subsequent years, the FCC has represented the Department on the Good Neighbor Environmental Board established under NAFTA.
- A community-based riparian habitat restoration project along the Santa Cruz River in Sonora, Mexico, lead by the Sonoran Institute and supported by member bureaus of the FCC and others was initiated in 1996.
- The FCC compiled a bibliography that summarizes all federal and non-federal natural resource programs and literature for the Lower Rio Grande/Rio Bravo del Norte watershed. The listing will enable resource managers to identify areas of common interest, leverage and maximize resources, and avoid duplication.
- The FCC represented the Department in the development of Border XXI. In conjunction with representatives of the Department of Agriculture and SEMARNAP, the FCC developed the Natural Resources sections, and portions of the Water and Environmental Information Resources sections, of the Border XXI Program documents. It also participates in work groups for water, enforcement, air, emergency response, and environmental information resources.
- FCC members provided coordination, leadership, technical assistance and funding to support a workshop to train Mexican biologists in the basics of bird monitoring. The workshop was held at Las Campanas Ranch, Chihuahua, Mexico, January 13-17, 1997.
- A draft International Wildfire Protection Agreement was developed and submitted to SEMARNAP for consideration in December 1996. Negotiations are still pending.
- The FCC was instrumental in obtaining an annual appropriation of \$500,000, beginning in FY 1996, to help establish and maintain a Tohono O'odham Resource Protection program, which provides protection for the Nation's cultural, historic and desert resources and helps them enforce tribal trespass ordinances.

- On May 5, 1997, Secretary Babbitt, Department of the Interior, and Julia Carabias, SEMARNAP, signed a Letter of Intent for Joint Work in Natural Protected Areas on the United States-Mexico Border. Pilot areas include the western Sonoran Desert and Big Bend National Park and adjacent protected areas in Mexico. The FCC played an important role in developing the Letter of Intent.
- In September 1997, Water-Resources Issues Fact Sheet No. 2 was printed describing "Water-resources Issues in the Mexican Highlands Subarea."
- Minerals Management Service sponsored, with FCC support, a Coastal and Marine Bi-National Energy and Environmental Information Transfer Meeting on December 16-18, 1997.
- "Protected Area of Wild and Aquatic Flora and Fauna in the Sierras of La Mariquita, La Elenita, and Rio San Pedro, in the Municipalities of Cananea, Naco and Santa Cruz, Sonora, Mexico," a 75-page management plan, was translated into English to enhance FCC understanding of the Upper San Pedro River Basin in Mexico.
- FCC member bureaus supported jaguar research in Northern Sonora Mexico per the Memorandum of Understanding between the US Fish and Wildlife Service and US Forest Service.
- A "Sisters Park" project was initiated at Chiricahua National Monument, Arizona, and Sierra los Ajos, Sonora, Mexico. A field office was established in the Mexican protected area.
- Site visits to southwest United States protected areas were coordinated by the National Park Service Mexico Affairs Office for Mexican environmental educators to review current programs in both natural and cultural protected areas managed by state and federal bureaus.
- FCC bureaus provided guidance for Chiricahua National Monument, Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, and Coronado National

Memorial cooperating with Mexican park managers in Sonora, specifically, El Pinacate and Sierra los Ajos.

- FCC member bureaus, partnered with several non-governmental organizations, formalized a Chihuahuan Desert Grassland Binational Cooperative Research Working Group.
- In April 1998, Water-Resources Issues Fact Sheet No. 3 was printed describing "Water-resources Issues in the Rio Grande—Rio Conchos to Amistad Reservoir Subarea."



Rio Grande east of Santa Elena Canyon, Big Bend National Park. Photo by L. Norris.

- "The Upper San Pedro River Basin of the United States and Mexico, A Resource Directory and an Overview of Natural Resource Issues Confronting Decision-makers and Natural Resource Managers," a 110-page report, was printed in May 1998 and distributed.
- Color infrared digital orthophotography and digital mapping have been completed for a large portion of the border region in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California. This multimillion dollar production effort is continuing. Finished projects are available through the US Geological Survey.

For more information, see the FCC Home Page at <http://www.doi.gov/fcc>.

MAP OF THE UNITED STATES - MEXICO BORDER AREA AS DELINEATED BY A SHARED WATER RESOURCES PERSPECTIVE

